

THE COMPANION,

AND WEEKLY MISCELLANY.

BY EDWARD EASY, ESQ.

—“A safe COMPANION, and an EASY Friend.”—Pope.—

VOL. II.

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THE PRICE OF THIS PAPER IS THREE DOLLARS PER ANNUM, PAYABLE
HALF-YEARLY IN ADVANCE...NO PAPER WILL BE SENT OUT OF
THE CITY, WITHOUT PREVIOUS PAYMENT, OR SURETY IN TOWN.

*Quantum potero, voce contendam ut hoc populus exaudeat et quæ de
causa breviter simpliciterque dixi ea confida probata esse omnibus.*
CICERO.

IN so enlightened a republic as the United States of America, we had fondly hoped to see every useless and pernicious custom extirpated, every practice which tends to the decadency of virtue, annihilated, and every hereditary ceremony unattended by utility, banished. It seems however to be a principle inherent in human nature, to touch with a gentle hand the altar of antiquity, and to look with disdain, nay, even horror, on every innovation. However awful they may appear to the mind infected with ignorance or superstition, innovations are nevertheless sometimes absolutely necessary to throw off a load of impositions, which the weakness or enthusiasm of mankind have for ages been heaping on their fellow-creatures.—Had not the fanaticism of modern Europe been resisted by the daring genius of Luther, the nations of the world might yet have been groaning under the sceptre of the Roman Pontiff. Had Copernicus been contented with the philosophy of his age, we might yet have adhered to the absurd idea of the revolution of the sun round the earth; or lastly, had not Sir Francis Bacon, who was in his intellectual what Sampson was in his corporeal powers, burst the fetters of ignorance, and torn down the pillars upon which the fabric of a false philosophy was supported, we might yet have been ignorant of the proper method of arriving at truth, or of acquiring a knowledge of the sciences. These preliminary observations seemed necessary to gain the acquiescence of the aged in our opinions, or at least their hearing—with the feelings of the young we know they will coincide.

Fathers! Permit me to call your attention to the early establishment of your sons in life. Let them pursue their course, through this world, like the luminary of the heavens, shedding from the first dawn of day until the close of the evening, a benign and cheering influence on the children of men. Like that luminary, we would have them to rise in life, pure and refulgent, and when they pass to the bourn of eternity, we would wish them, like him, to disappear. Mothers! Do you wish to secure the felicity of your youthful daughters? Do you wish to establish their honour and domestic felicity, on a rock against which the waves of sorrow and misfortune may dash with impetuosity, but are split and broken in the conflict? Attend and listen to us, while we lay before you the dictates of experience.

The early union of the sexes is evidently the design and intention of nature, or why has she gifted us, so soon, with passions the most violent, with passions, which in search of gratification, will toss reason from her empire? Will it be said they were given us to exercise our virtue? No! Surely such an assertion could have no foundation in truth. The authority of Reason at that time of life, when the passions are in their greatest ardour is too weak to resist the tempest of a momentary impulse, which convulses the whole system, and like the lightening of heaven, instantaneously fires the object that it strikes.—She could not, then, have given them to lure us into vice, or folly. Nor can we say she only gave us possession of desires which were meant to torment or tantalize us. For we must not accuse heaven of inconsistencies, when her ways can with such facility be interpreted to our satisfaction. And what can admit of a more rational and consistent interpretation, than the case before us?

The enemy of early marriage will tell you, that they resist improvements in science and knowledge. This declaration, we trust, will, upon examination, be found to rest but on a sandy foundation, and that it is, in ap-

pearance, rather than in reality, true. Love we will readily acknowledge is an affection of the mind almost paramount to all others—it has a sway at once authoritative and commanding; but is of such a nature that when we are in possession of its object, its action is not so violent, nor is its influence so supreme on the mind. It will follow then, as a necessary consequence, from what has been said, that after marriage is a period more favourable to the cultivation of the human mind, than before it. The youthful lover, whose eyes beam with joy, and whose whole countenance is brightened up at the approach of the idol of his heart, is by no means in an appropriate condition for the prosecution of his studies. His susceptible heart can be intent on nothing but the object of his affections. That uneasiness which is the natural and necessary concomitant of love, subjects his mind to a thousand apprehensions and imaginary terrors. You might as well attempt to arrest the sun in his course as to divest him of them. But no sooner is love in possession of its object, than the torrent of anxiety subsides, and the stream is left to flow in peace and tranquility within its banks. Then it is that knowledge may be pursued with advantage and success.

But the acquisition of knowledge is not the only point to be gained, by entering into marriage at an early period of life. A source of the purest happiness is opened. A prospect is held out to fathers of beholding their sons grow up in virtue and usefulness, and his daughters crowned with the wreath of honour and felicity. What would be the sensations of a father, in beholding his son the pillar of his country, or in seeing him with a victorious arm repel the aggressions of the enemies of the state, and his daughters extending the hand of charity, to the poor and oppressed, or by her manners refining and illuminating her country. Surrounded by such a group, he might look with indifference on the cares of the world—he might laugh at its follies. Liberated from a torturing anxiety for his posterity, he might rest his hoary head on the lap of contentment, and when the messenger of death arrived to beckon him to his tomb, he might retire from the noise and bustle of the world, and seal his lips with the sound of resignation.

If mankind would enter earlier into the matrimonial state, a train of the worst of evils would be avoided.—We should not have the sorrow to behold the streets of our cities crowded with voluptuaries. The midnight song of revelry would no longer assail our ears. Those hours, which would otherwise be employed in watchfulness and debauch, would be spent in a virtuous retirement, in se-

curing domestic felicity, or in the acquisition of an useful store of knowledge. Those moments, which would otherwise be exhausted in the degradation of the female sex, in depressing women to the lowest grade of infamy and misery, would be spent in elevating her to the summit of honour and contentment. A glorious revolution would take place in the manners of men, and the period when such a change would be effected, would be considered by the historian as the true æra from which to date the decline of vice, and the exaltation of virtue and morality.

These are sentiments to which I have been long attached. I have had an opportunity of examining their effects, and I declare to you that I am convinced of their importance and utility. Oh! my God, may my children adopt the opinions of their father, and pursue that path which will inevitably lead them to the temple of happiness.

SIDNEY.

Mr. Easy,

I am always pleased to observe young men of abilities emulous of fame in the literary world, and am very glad that you have so many new writers in your paper. I would wish to be numbered among some of the inferior rank, if any there be; and therefore send you this my first production, which, should its infantile and illiterate cast not be ill received, I may, in time, cherished by the smiles of its benefactor, obtain a seat among the wise men who amuse and instruct our city, through the medium of the Companion; not as one of their number, but merely an humble imitator of their virtues.

From my humble character, and unsuspecting personal appearance, I am admitted into almost every grade of society. The statesman will not hesitate to let me know the most important secrets of policy when communicated to a friend where I am present; because “they are subjects which I don’t comprehend.” The mistress of the house cares not how much I know of her gallantries, considering my silence as being bought by the love of a good place, and a little to jingle on Sundays. The love-sick damsel always entrusts me with the carriage of her letters, and not unfrequently with a great share of confidence, merely because I am too humble to molest or too modest to speak of her to any body—and thus from the head to the foot of the family, I am the confidant, the friend, or the ignorant servant.

You, no doubt, with half the opportunities which I have had, would amuse one half the world and instruct the other. But it is an old and a wise saying, that he who can best comprehend, always has the most incomprehen-

sible matter to study from, while the simple and untutored are daily gratified with ideas ready for digestion, and instances of real life to prove their efficacious effects.

My present situation being in a family of *noble* extraction, you may easily imagine in what a light I am viewed. The genealogy of every animal, rats and mice excepted, about the house, is kept with the greatest care and precision; and I am the daily repository of my mistress's pedigree—who never fails, on every interview, to let me know that her grand-father *might have been* a lord, and her mother a duchess *by this time*, had not their unexpected departure for this country prevented the issue.

My young mistresses, on the contrary, are mere angels—possessing comely persons, and good understandings. They are generally liked by the men, and envied by the women—especially the reigning queen of Puberty, their maiden aunt of eighty, who watches these rose-buds with all the care imaginable, lest the foul contagion of the other sex, should corrupt their youth and innocence, and make the tender lambkins know the nature of their existence before age ripens, or experience (like her's) teaches the benefits to be derived from celibacy. Now I do heartily disagree with this mode of education. Modesty should always be taught by example, and sanctioned by the natural feelings of the heart: a tutor to youth should never exercise absolute nor preternatural powers; but lead them imperceptibly from bad to good, still holding nature as the modest and indelible tie, by which virtues are impressed, and vice expelled from the mind.

THE SUBALTERN.

AN ESSAY

On the Plan and Character of Thompson's Seasons.

(Continued from page 44.)

The period of Summer is marked by fewer and less striking changes in the face of Nature. A soft and pleasing langour, interrupted only by the gradual progression of the vegetable and animal tribes towards their state of maturity, forms the leading character of this Season. The active fermentation of the juices, which the first access of genial warmth had excited, now subsides; and the increasing heats rather inspire faintness and inaction than lively exertions. The insect race alone seem animated with peculiar vigour under the more direct influence of the sun; and are therefore with equal truth and advantage introduced by the Poet to enliven the silent and drooping scenes presented by the other forms of animal nature. As this source, however, together with whatever

else our summers afford, is insufficient to furnish novelty and business enough for this act of the drama of the year, the Poet judiciously opens a new field, profusely fertile in objects suited to the glowing colours of descriptive poetry. By an easy and natural transition, he quits the chastised summer of our temperate clime for those regions where a perpetual summer reigns, exalted by such superior degrees of solar heat as give an entirely new face to almost every part of nature. The terrific grandeur prevalent in some of these, the exquisite richness and beauty in others, and the novelty in all, afford such a happy variety of the poet's selection, that we need not wonder if some of his noblest pieces are the product of this delightful excursion. He returns, however, with apparent satisfaction, to take a last survey of the softer summer of our island; and after closing the prospect of terrestrial beauties, artfully shifts the scene to celestial splendours, which, though perhaps not more striking in this season than in some of the others, are now alone agreeable objects of contemplation in a northern climate.

Autumn is too eventful a period in the history of the year within the temperate parts of the globe, to require foreign aid for rendering it more varied and interesting. The promise of the Spring is now fulfilled. The silent and gradual process of maturation is completed; and human Industry beholds with triumph the rich products of its toil. The vegetable tribes disclose their infinitely various forms of *fruit*; which term, while, with respect to common use, it is confined to a few peculiar modes of fructification, in the more comprehensive language of the Naturalist includes every product of vegetation by which the rudiments of a future progeny are developed, and separated from the parent plant. These are in part collected and stored up by those animals for whose sustenance during the ensuing sleep of nature they are provided. The rest, furnished with various contrivances for dissemination, are scattered, by the friendly winds which now begin to blow, over the surface of that earth which they are to clothe and decorate. The young of the animal race, which Spring and Summer had brought forth and cherished, having now acquired sufficient vigour, quit their concealments, and offer themselves to the pursuit of the carnivorous among their fellow-animals, and of the great destroyer man. Thus the scenery is enlivened with the various sports of the hunter; which, however repugnant, they may appear to that system of general benevolence and sympathy which philosophy would inculcate, have ever afforded a most agreeable exertion to the human powers, and have much to plead in their favour as a neces-

sary part of the great plan of Nature. Indeed, she marks her intention with sufficient precision, by refusing to grant any longer those friendly shades which had grown for the protection of the infant offspring. The grove loses its honours; but before they are entirely tarnished, an adventitious beauty, arising from that gradual decay which loosens the withering leaf, gilds the autumnal landscape with a temporary splendour, superior to the verdure of Spring, or the luxuriance of Summer. The infinitely various and ever-changing hues of the leaves at this season, melting into every soft gradation of tint and shade, have long engaged the imitation of the painter, and are equally happy ornaments in the description of a poet.

These unvarying symptoms of approaching Winter now warn several of the winged tribes to prepare for their aerial voyage to those happy climates of perpetual summer, where no deficiency of food or shelter can ever distress them; and about the same time other fowls of hardier constitution, which are contented with escaping the iron winters of the arctic regions arrive to supply the vacancy. Thus the striking scenes afforded by that wonderful part of the economy of Nature, the migration of birds, present themselves at this season to the poet. The thickening fogs, the heavy rains, the swollen rivers, while they deform this sinking period of the year, add new subjects to the pleasing variety which reigns throughout its whole course and which justifies the Poet's character of it, as the season when the Muse "best exerts her voice."

Winter, directly opposite as it is in other respects to Summer, yet resembles it in this, that it is a Season in which Nature is employed rather in secretly preparing for the mighty changes which it successively brings to light, than in the actual exhibition of them. It is therefore a period equally barren of events; and has still less of animation than Summer, inasmuch as lethargic insensibility is a state more distant from vital energy than the languor of indolent repose. From the fall of the leaf, and withering of the herb, an unvarying death-like torpor oppresses almost the whole vegetable creation, and a considerable part of the animal, during this entire portion of the year. The whole insect race, which filled every part of the Summer landscape with life and motion, are now either buried in profound sleep, or actually no longer exist, except in the unformed rudiments of a future progeny. Many of the birds and quadrupeds are retired to concealments, from which not even the calls of hunger can force them; and the rest, intent only on the preservation of a joyless being, have ceased to exert those powers of pleasing, which, at

other seasons, so much contribute to their mutual happiness, as well as to the amusement of their human sovereign. Their social connexions, however are improved by their wants. In order the better to procure their scanty subsistence, and resist the inclemencies of the sky, they are taught by instinct to assemble in flocks; and this provision has the secondary effect of gratifying the spectator with something of novelty and action even in the dreariness of a wintry prospect.

But it is in the extraordinary changes and agitations which the elements and the surrounding atmosphere undergo during this season, that the poet of nature must principally look for relief from the gloomy uniformity reigning through other parts of the creation. Here scenes are presented to his view, which, were they less frequent must strike with wonder and admiration the most incurious spectator. The effects of cold are more sudden, and in many instances more extraordinary and unexpected, than those of heat. He who has beheld the vegetable productions of even a northern Summer, will not be greatly amazed at the richer and more luxuriant, but still resembling, growths of the tropics. But one, who has always been accustomed to view water in a liquid and colourless state, cannot form the least conception of the same element as hardened into an extensive plain of solid crystal, or covering the ground with a robe of the purest white. The highest possible degree of astonishment must therefore attend the first view of these phenomena; and as in our temperate climate but a small portion of the year affords these spectacles, we find that, even here, they have novelty enough to excite emotions of agreeable surprise. But it is not to novelty alone that they owe their charms. Their intrinsic beauty is, perhaps, individually superior to that of the gayest objects presented by the other seasons. Where is the elegance and brilliancy that can compare with that which decorates every tree or bush on the clear morning succeeding a night of hoar frost? or what is the lustre that would not appear dull and tarnished in competition with a field of snow just glazed over with frost? By the vivid description of such objects as these, contrasted with the savage sublimity of storms & tempests, our Poet has been able to produce a set of winter landscapes, as engaging to the fancy as the apparently happier scenes of genial warmth and verdure.

But he has not trusted entirely to these resources for combating the natural sterility of Winter. Repeating the pleasing artifice of his SUMMER, he has called in foreign aid, and has heightened the scenery with grandeur and horror not our own. The famished troops of wolves

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pouring from the Alps; the mountains of snow rolling down the precipices of the same regions; the dreary plains over which the Laplander urges his rein deer; the wonders of the icy sea; and volcanoes "flaming through a waste of snow;" are objects judiciously selected from all that Nature presents most singular and striking in the various domains of boreal cold and wintry desolation.

(To be continued.)

Mr. Easy,

While we receive with gratitude from trans-atlantic genius and erudition the first essentials for mental improvement, it is the duty of those at the head of Literature to shield the fair fabric as well from the rude blasts of the purse-proud barbarian, as the indirect attacks of political madmen. I believe this is your sentiment, and therefore forward the following instance of that contemptuous behaviour with which some people think they have a right to insult modest merit. It is a conversation between a Cent-per-Cent man and an author of unassumed but real talents, improved by a liberal education.

MARYLAND.

DIALOGUE.

Cent.—And so, Sir, you have—got—a—heigho—(Yawns)—have got a play, Sir. Pray, Sir, where was you bred up, pray?

Author.—At Leyden, Sir.

Cent.—At Leyden? What among the Dutch? Droll enough!—Faith, a fine place to make plays in.—Butter, cheese, and Hollands gin, are three fine ingredients for poetry, lia, ha, ha—I suppose all the ladies in your piece are Dutch frows. Yes, damn me! I'll hold fifty on't—and all the fine gentlemen, *Mynheer* Love Makers, who, if they quarrel, instead of drawing their swords, go to *snicker-de-snee* with one another.

A lady who was present said,—My dear, Mr. Cent, I am ashamed of you. How can you shock a gentleman so.

Cent.—Shock the gentleman! No faith! He knows too much of the world for that. And I keep company with the best writers in the country. Sure, my dear, I must know how to behave to authors. Well, Sir, and so at Leyden, you say—I suppose you studied the oriental sciences there?

Author.—The oriental languages, Sir?

Cent.—No, Sir, I mean the oriental Sciences. I believe I am too much acquainted with both sciences and languages. I read um all and every one, from the tutonic

down to old *Homer's Telemachus*, his *ill-lad* and *odd Essays*, and all his *Oddities*.

Lady.—Upon my honour, Mr. Cent, you have had a vast iddication.

Cent.—No, faith—I never read much, 'pon honour; I was rather a buck at school. But I had a quicker way of study, I believe, than any other fellow ever had in the world.—But a—Mr. Author—and so—don't you never write songs?

Author.—Sometimes, Sir.

Cent.—Come, Sir, sing us one of your songs to this lady?

Author.—Indeed, Sir, I cannot sing.

Cent.—Not sing!—but I insist on it, to oblige the lady.—Now we'll have some fun. We'll make him expose himself.

Lady.—For heaven's sake, Mr. Cent, don't ask him. See how disconsolate he looks. It really shocks me.

Cent.—Well, now you shall have a droll scene, my dear. And so, Sir, I suppose you live by writing?

Author.—I endeavour to maintain myself and family, Sir, by every exertion of my small capacity, that honesty and industry will warrant.

Cent.—And pray, Sir, what can you get a year by writing.

Author.—As to that, Sir—

Cent.—Ay, as to that, Sir—Oh, mum, a word to the wise is enough. You are not willing to confess, lest I should want to borrow a cool hundred of you. Why, Sir, my credit is pretty good. And if you were to lend me a cool thousand, I'd give you good interest for it.

Lady.—Dear, Mr. Cent, you are very wrong, and barbarously absurd—you see he turns pale and red every minute. Indeed you have hurt him too much.

Cent. Well, mum, then.—I suppose, Sir, in your play, you have been critically exact in preserving the unities. I suppose you have seen what *Harry Stottle* and *Bess Hugh* say upon the subject? for that's what I blame Shakespeare for; the fellow had a fine knack at metaphor to be sure, but he never understood the unities. 'Tis a pity he had not been a scholar, and could have read what *Harry Stottle* and *Bess Hugh* say.

Author.—Aristotle, Sir, to the best of my remembrance, says—

Cent.—Ay, ay, I know as well as you do what—But that's nothing to the purpose now—what either *Harry Stottle*, or his brother, the stagyrite, says; I speak how things should be *done*. Damn it! there's nobody but gentlemen—can write or judge of writing. I wish it was

not quite so damn'd scandalous to be either an author or a scholar. There are, indeed, about twelve of us that could restore the drama to that original purity in which the divine Plato, the preceptor of Socrates and Plautus, says the stage ought to be preserved.

Author.—Under favour, Sir; I did not think Plato was much attach'd to dramatic poetry, any more than he was to Homer, whom I can't think he uses with much liberality.

Cent.—What, doesn't Plato use Homer well? That's false! Mr. Author, you must allow me to tell you—I beg pardon—but I know better—Plato is the best friend Homer ever had.

Author.—But I mean, Sir, that Plato who was disciple to Socrates.

Cent.—Pho, pho! Mr. Author, we ain't to be humm'd so, neither! You are devilishly out. There never was but one Plato, and he taught Socrates all he *know'd*; and if you have a mind to a bett, you shall have your sum on't. This Plato, my dear lady, was *cotempore* with the first *primitive fathers*.

Lady.—Pray, Mr. Cent, were the *prime five fathers* poets or play-writers?

Cent.—No, no, madam; they were what *was* called Christian Philosophers, in opposition to the Heathen Philosophers. And this Socrates we have been talking of, he was burned for his religion, because he turned Christian.

Lady.—Let me perish, Mr. Cent, if your memory is'n't astonishing. I shall be jealous lest your having so much learning in your head should prevent your thinking of me.

Cent.—Never, by all that's soft, I swear. Upon which he kissed the lady, and turned to the author with a look of self-complacency, as if he would have said—what would you give could you do so? I suppose, Mr. Author, that you must have heard of Sophocles and Empedocles?

Author.—Yes, Sir.

Cent.—I read all their works at college, but their Tragedies and Comedies. And though I never looked into them since, I only wish I had a hundred on't—that I could say 'em all by *heart*, without missing an apostrophe. And I suppose you have heard of Terence, and Euripedes, and Lucan's true history? Swift stole every line of Gulliver from him, to my knowledge.

Lady.—Well, this conversation is to me immensely agreeable. My dear Cent, you are the most surprising creature—

Cent.—My soul's affection, I do believe—nay, without vanity, I'm sure on't, that had I a mind to't, I could have

made a greater figure as a writer or a scholar than any one of um all. But I was always above such slovenly, pedantic notions; authors are very well, when a man has a mind to make a lady a present of a song, or an *aristocrostich*. Why then such fellows are useful; because they take the trouble of composing these things off a gentleman's hands; and books—why now and then of a rainy day, are well enough; but at other times, they are damn'd low, dull stuff;—but I beg your pardon, Mr. Author, I had forgot you was here. I'll puzzle him—I'll throw a dab of Latin at him [*aside to the Lady*—You remember Horace his advice about discipline—

Qui mihi dicipulus puer es cupis atque doceri.

Author.—I beg your pardon, Sir, but that is not in Horace.

Cent.—Not in Horace! That's a fine hum, indeed. Not Horace! Why, what the devil, sure I know Horace a little better than you. I thought I should find you out—Why, doesn't he go on and say—

“*Hoc ades huc amino concupidiectis tuo.*”

Up he started, looked in the pier-glass, and stroked his eye-brows gently. The Lady at that instant, standing with her back to him, said to the Gentleman, Sir, this Gentleman is a prodigious scholar, and you must submit to him in these things, I assure you. The author perceived the Lady was winking at him while she said the above; but he could not possibly give up Horace to *Qui Mihi*. Emboldened by the Lady's signal, he told him, that perhaps as gentlemen were not oblig'd to read so much as authors were, his memory might not be—

Cent.—O damn it, Sir, as to that, I have a better memory than any of the vulgar; and those two lines are Horace's, and I'll bett you fifty on't. Out he pulled a green purse, seemingly full of money; which in his eagerness to enforce his learning, he let fall upon the table, and broke a cup and saucer belonging to a set of French china, that had been presented to the lady by a former lover, and which she told the Gentleman, she would not have had destroyed for five hundred pounds. A strange scene of altercation ensued. Reproaches rose high between them, until the gallant swore several of the most horrid oaths profaneness could suggest—that he would never speak to her again.—He then hurried out of the room, flinging the door after him as violently, as if, like Sampson, he would have shaken the house about their ears.

The Lady, with a look expressive of the most delicate sensibility, made the author every apology in her power. She offered him Cent's full purse, which he had left on the table, as a small recompence for the supercilious treatment

he had received. But the poor author's mind, not labouring with the epidemic contagion of self-interest, but burning with the fever of contempt, rejected the Peruvian dross with every grateful sense of the Lady's goodness. He could not but spurn what, when possessed by the ignorant, insolent, and unworthy, is held as the barometer, and substitute of every virtue and talent.

THE READING OF NOVELS

Many works of this description, in our language, may be read with innocence and safety. The novels of Fielding, of Richardson, and of Radcliffe, no man of taste will peruse without pleasure, and no man of reflection without improvement. But far different from these, are the volumes which usually crowd the shelves of a circulating library, or are seen tumbling on the sofas of a fashionable drawing room. It is not the occasional perusal of the best, but the habitual reading of the worst, which it is the wish of every wise and good man to censure and restrain. Not a few of these, instead of possessing that ease, perspicuity, and elegance of style, which should seem essential to lighter compositions, and works intended only for amusement, are so defective in the common properties of expression, and even the ordinary rules of grammar, that they cannot fail to corrupt the language and deprave the taste of all who bestow their time and attention upon them.—The authors of others seem ambitious, on every occasion, to introduce, not only foreign idioms and phraseology, and the inflated effluence of Gallic oratory, but such colloquial terms and sentences from French writers, as they would persuade us, convey their ideas with greater force or perspicuity, than any expression which our own defective language can supply. The real motive of the writers is, probably nothing more than the contemptible affectation of superior learning; but the practice has an obvious tendency to corrupt the purity and destroy the character of our English diction, and as far as it is in the power of novellists to effect it, to reduce us to babble a dialect of France.—Some of these publications betray such a laxity in their doctrines of morality, and exhibit such a licentiousness of sentiment and description, as cannot fail to inflame the passions, which they ought to restrain, and to undermine the virtue, which they profess to support. Others are made the vehicle of principles, hostile to our civil and ecclesiastical establishments. A still greater because a more general fault, is the misrepresentation of human characters and human life. Love, resistless love, is there considered as the general agent in terrestrial transactions; as the sole distributor of

good and evil, of happiness and misery, to mankind. Personal attachment conceived at sight, and matured in a moment, bears down alike the distinctions of rank and the maxims of prudence; and by the magic wand of the genius of romance, the daughter of the cottager is exalted into a countess, and the labourer at the anvil or the mine, soon graces the court and the drawing-room. The hero and the heroine are involved in distresses in which no other mortals ever were involved, and generally delivered by means by which none but themselves ever were delivered. They are, however, always married at last, and attain, in the possession of each other, such happiness as no human being ever yet attained, and such as Nature and Providence, with all their bounty, never will bestow.

By the constant perusal of narratives of this description, the youth of both sexes are encouraged to cherish expectations that never can be realized, and to form notions of each other, which painful experience will every day refute. The mind too, by exercising only its weaker powers, becomes enervated and enfeebled, disgusted with the tumult of business, or the roughness of contradiction, the most valuable season of life is spent in the sport of musing, instead of the labour of thinking, in the indulgence of the fairy visions of hope, and the reveries of a perverted imagination, instead of the pursuit of science, the formation of maxims of wisdom, and the establishment of the principles of moral duty.

The votes of the judicious are, we doubt not, against that folly, so fascinating and so fashionable, of novel-reading; but the practice of the majority is clearly on the other side; and against measures, which they can neither approve nor prevent, all that the minority can perform is to assert the arguments of truth, and to enter the protest of reprobation.

Our readers will require no apology from us for giving a place in this miscellany to the following admired poem. To elegance of composition, it adds such a vein of morality as we seldom meet with in the columns of a mere news-paper. And although many of our friends may have read it there, yet we perform an agreeable duty in rescuing it from unmerited oblivion, by entering it upon our record.

THE GRAVE.

There is a calm for those who weep,

A rest for weary pilgrims found;

They softly lie, and sweetly sleep

Low in the ground.

The storm that wrecks the winter sky,

No more disturbs their deep repose,

Than summer evening's latest sigh

That shuts the rose.

I long to lay this painful head,
And aching heart beneath the soil,
To slumber in that dreamless bed
From all my toil.
For Mercy stole me at my birth.
And cast me helpless on the wild;
I perish—O, my mother earth!
Take home thy child.
On thy dear lap these limbs reclin'd
Shall gently moulder into thee;
Nor leave one wretched trace behind,
Resembling me.
Hark! a strange sound affrights mine ear;
My pulse—my brain runs wild—I rave;
—Ah! who art thou whose voice I hear?
“I am the GRAVE!
“The Grave, that never spake before,
Hath found at length a tongue to chide;
O listen—I will speak no more;
Be silent, Pride!
“Art thou a wretch of hope forlorn,
The victim of consuming care?
Is thy distracted conscience torn
By fell despair!
“Do foul misdeeds of former times
Wring with remorse thy guilty breast?
And ghosts of unforgiven crimes
Murder thy rest?
“Lash'd by the furies of the mind,
From wrath and vengeance would'st thou flee,
Ah! think not, hope not, fool, to find
A friend in me.
“By all the terrors of the tomb,
Beyond the powers of tongue to tell:
By the dread secrets of the womb!
By Death and Hell!
“I charge thee LIVE!—repent and pray;
In dust thy infamy deplore,
There yet is mercy—go thy way,
And sin no more.
“Art thou a MOURNER?—Hast thou known
The joy of innocent delights?
Endearing days for ever flown,
And tranquil nights?
O LIVE!—and deeply cherish still
The sweet remembrance of the past:
Rely on heav'n's unchanging will
For peace at last.
“Art thou a *Wanderer*?—Hast thou seen
O'erwhelming tempests drown thy bark?
A shipwreck'd sufferer hast thou been,
Misfortune's mark?
“Tho' long of winds and waves the sport,
Condemn'd in wretchedness to roam,
Live!—thou shalt reach a shelt'ring port,
A quiet home.

“To Friendship didst thou trust thy fame?
And was thy friend a deadly foe,
Who stole into thy breast to aim
A surer blow?
“Live! and repine not o'er his loss,
A loss not worthy to be told;
Thou hast mistaken sordid dross
For purest gold.
“Go, seek that treasure, seldom found,
Of power the fiercest griefs to calm,
And sooth the bosom's deepest wound,
With heavenly balm.
“In woman hast thou plac'd thy bliss,
And did the *fair one* faithless prove?
Hath she betray'd thee with a kiss,
And sold thy love?
“Live! 'twas a false bewildering fire!
Too often love's insidious dart
Thrills the fond soul with sweet desire,
But kills the heart.
“A nobler flame shall warm thy breast,
A brighter maiden's virtuous charms!
Blest thou shalt be, supremely blest,
In beauty's arms.
“—Whate'er thy lot—whoe'er thou be—
Confess thy folly, kiss the rod,
And in thy chastening sorrows see
The hand of God.
“A bruised reed he will not break;
Afflictions all his children feel;
He wounds them for his mercy's sake,
He wounds to heal.
“Humbled beneath his mighty hand,
Prostrate, his Providence adore;
Tis done!—arise! he bids thee stand,
To fall no more.
“Now, Trav'ler in the vale of tears,
To realms of everlasting light,
Through time's dark wilderness of years
Pursue thy flight.
“There is a calm for those who weep,
A rest for weary pilgrims found:
And while the mouldering ashes sleep
Low in the ground,
“The soul, of origin divine,
God's glorious image, freed from clay,
In heav'n's eternal sphere shall shine,
A star of day!
“The sun is but a spark of fire,
A transient meteor in the sky;
The soul, immortal as its Sire,
Shall never die.”

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